

PRESS RELEASE

GLOBAL ORGANISATIONS CALL FOR 'A TRUE DATA REVOLUTION' IN ORDER FOR UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS TO BE REACHED

The Royal Statistical Society (RSS), with both the International Statistical Institute (ISI) and the American Statistical Association (ASA), is marking World Statistics Day on the 20th of October with a statement urging that global development must no longer be hampered by a lack of the most basic data about the social and economic circumstances in which people live. At the time of going to press, almost 50 organisations worldwide have signed up to the statement calling for 'a true data revolution' to measure progress toward the new Sustainable Development Goals.

Marking the second ever World Statistics Day, the statement emphasises that national statistical systems are central to global development. In order for poverty to be abolished, everywhere and in all forms, it is essential that everyone is counted, progress is monitored, and that information is made available as widely as possible. Above all, the statement concludes, useful and useable information must be put into the hands of everyone who needs it.

Whilst the statement notes that significant progress has been made internationally in strengthening national statistical systems, more must be done to meet the data challenges of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The statement calls for:

- All national statistical systems to be properly financed.
- Support for the development of statistical skills and expertise.
- Access to new tools and technology to be provided.
- Open data and the use of new data sources for development.
- Support for the transformation of data into actionable information.

RSS President, Professor Peter Diggle commenting on the statement said:

"The poorest people in the world face an overwhelming need for progress. Each country needs to make its own progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, but there are crucial gaps in the data and capacity to measure this. The RSS is glad to see yet more evidence of broad support for a genuinely world-wide 'data revolution' on World Statistics Day."

ENDS

Leaders' 2015 document says in paragraph 3 "We resolve, between now and 2030, to end poverty and hunger everywhere". However, one SDG "target" is to eradicate only "extreme poverty", and another to "halve poverty by national definitions." But **member states have also agreed human rights.**

The Royal Statistical Society press release is correct that "the SDGs" are only part of the UN development agenda. However, the societies' statement itself may mislead. **Some 'SDG' targets are less ambitious** than existing agreements which UN members reaffirmed in 2015, 2016 and 2017 - such as water and sanitation for all humans by 2020 and 2025.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were set in September 2015, at the United Nations General Assembly. These goals formed **part** of an ambitious agenda for world development from **2016 to 2030: to wipe out poverty**, fight inequality and tackle climate change. Seventeen goals with 169 targets **and more than 300 indicators were put in place to monitor progress.**

Incorrect. Indicators were to be discussed and will be reviewed in 2020. This is a far from trivial point.

For further information on the 'data revolution', please see the United Nations' Independent Expert Advisory Group (IEAG) 2014 report, entitled 'A World that Counts: Mobilising the Data Revolution for Sustainable Development', on how a 'data revolution' in sustainable development might be brought about. www.statslife.org.uk/news/1902-un-publishes-report-on-using-data-for-sustainable-development

Joint partners on the statement:

The Royal Statistical Society (RSS) founded in 1834 is one of the world's most distinguished and renowned statistical societies. It is a learned society for statistics, a professional body for statisticians and a charity which promotes statistics, data and evidence for the public good. Today the Society has 6000 members around the world. www.rss.org.uk

The International Statistical Institute (ISI) is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation and has consultative status by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations since 1949. Officially, the ISI was established in 1885, though the initial international gatherings of statisticians started earlier - back in 1853. www.isi-web.org/

The American Statistical Association (ASA) founded in 1839, is the world's largest community of statisticians, The ASA supports excellence in the development, application, and dissemination of statistical science through meetings, publications, membership services, education, accreditation, and advocacy. Its members serve in industry, government, and academia in more than 90 countries. www.amstat.org/

The RSS's Significance magazine will soon publish an article on the topic of 'the data revolution' by Claire Melamed, who is director for poverty and inequality at the Overseas Development Institute. Claire will also be speaking at an RSS event to mark World Statistics Day in London on the 20th October. We can make the Significance article available to reporters on request.

CONTACTS

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